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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 001893

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - UN REFORM
PARIS - TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

UN REFORM

(B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

AS THE EU ECONOMIC SUMMIT KICKS OFF IN BRUSSELS, THE THREAT OF A "NO" VOTE FOR THE REFERENDUM ON THE EU CONSTITUTION DOMINATES TUESDAY'S HEADLINES. ECONOMIC CENTRIST LA TRIBUNE LEADS: "THE FRENCH 'NO' INVITES ITSELF TO THE EUROPEAN SUMMIT."

LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION GIVES THE DETAILS OF "CHIRAC'S PLAN" TO SWAY VOTERS AND ADDS THAT CHIRAC IS "BETTING THE FARM ON THE REFERENDUM. IT WILL DECIDE HIS FATE AS THE HEAD OF STATE. IF THE YES VOTE TAKES IT, HE CAN CONTINUE TO DREAM OF A THIRD TERM IN OFFICE, IF THE NO TAKES IT, HE WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS THE PRESIDENT WHO MADE EUROPE IMplode." POPULAR RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE PARISIEN ASKS "WHAT IF FRANCE VOTES NO?" AND PUTS FORWARD THE VARIOUS HYPOTHESES ON THE EFFECT THAT THIS WOULD HAVE ON THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION IN GENERAL AND ON THE FUTURE OF PRESIDENT CHIRAC AND PRIME MINISTER RAFFARIN IN PARTICULAR.

COMMENTATORS ARGUE THAT THE BOLKESTEIN DIRECTIVE, OUTSOURCING, THE REAL ESTATE SCANDAL SURROUNDING THE FORMER FINANCE MINISTER AND THE STAGNATION OF FRENCH BUYING POWER HAVE LED TO A SORT OF COLLECTIVE "NO" ON THE PART OF THE POPULATION. (REGIONAL OUEST FRANCE)

KOFI ANNAN'S PLAN FOR UN REFORM IS ONE OF THE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL STORIES TODAY. LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION CALLS THE PLAN "THE MOST AMBITIOUS THAT THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION HAS SEEN SINCE ITS CREATION." ECONOMIC RIGHT-OF-CENTER LES ECHOS CARRIES AN OP-ED BY KOFI ANNAN ENTITLED: "UN - A NECESSARY REFORM FOR MORE FREEDOM." (SEE PART C)

LIBERATION CARRIES A FULL-PAGE ANALYSIS PENNED BY THE DAILY'S CORRESPONDENTS IN BRUSSELS ON THE NOMINATION OF PAUL WOLFOWITZ TO HEAD THE WORLD BANK. THE TONE OF THE PIECE ENTITLED: "WHY EUROPE IS SMILING AT WOLFOWITZ" IS A RADICAL CHANGE FROM COMMENTARIES IN YESTERDAY'S PRESS AND CHRISTIAN LOSSON AND JEAN QUATREMER WRITE: "AFTER ALL, PARIS IS COUNTING ON THE U.S. TO SUPPORT PASCAL LAMY'S NOMINATION AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE WTO."

IN THE REGIONAL PRESS AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA, TERRY SCHIAVO'S FATE CONTINUES TO PROMPT COMMENTARIES, MOST OF WHICH AGREE THAT THE CASE IS BEING USED FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES, GIVING THE PRESIDENT A NEW OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW HIS ATTACHMENT TO THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT. "OTHERWISE, WHY WOULD GEORGE BUSH HAVE RUSHED. TO SIGN A LAW THAT WAS THROWN TOGETHER OVERNIGHT AND SIGNED IN THREE HOURS TIME BY THE MAJORITY OF THE HOUSE REPUBLICANS?" (REGIONAL DAILY LE REPUBLIQUE DES PYRENEES) THE EDITORIAL IN REGIONAL LE PROGRES IS HIGHLY CRITICAL, PUTTING FORWARD THAT IT IS HEARTENING TO SEE A PRESIDENT WHO "UPHOLDS THE DEATH PENALTY AND PROMOTES THE RIGHT TO OWN WEAPONS, WHO IS PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR TWO INTERNATIONAL WARS THAT CAUSED THE DEATH OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, SUDDENLY SHOW SUCH A FONDNESS FOR LIFE."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

UN REFORM

"TIME TO ACT"

PATRICK SABATIER IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (03/22): "AS WITH EUROPE, THE BLATANT FAILURES AND SHORTFALLS OF THE UN ARE NOT DUE ONLY TO THE WEIGHTINESS OF THE INSTITUTION, NOR THE INCOMPETENCE OF ITS OFFICIALS. ITS SHORTCOMINGS ARE REAL. BUT THE REASONS HAVE MORE TO DO WITH THE POLITICAL RESOLVE OF ITS MEMBER STATES, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH THE MOST POWER AND MONEY, THE ONES THAT PAY THE BILLS. THIS IS WHY, ALAS, WE HAVE CAUSE TO CAST DOUBTS ON THE REALIZATION OF THE REFORMS THAT WERE PROPOSED YESTERDAY. THE UN MAY WELL BE THE WORST OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, BUT LACKING AN ALTERNATIVE, IT IS PREFERABLE TO THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE, OR OF THE STRONGEST."

"KOFI ANNAN: MAN OF THE DAY"

COMMUNIST L'HUMANITE (03/22): "KOFI ANNAN'S REFORM PROPOSAL FOR THE UN, WHILE STRESSING THE CENTRAL ROLE THAT THE ORGANIZATION HAS TO PLAY IN WORLD GOVERNANCE DOES NOT STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH REMAINS THE MOST DEMOCRATIC PART OF THE INSTITUTION. ANOTHER THORNY SUBJECT IS THE PROPOSAL TO LEGALIZE PREEMPTIVE WAR BY GIVING THE UNSC TO POWER TO HAVE RECOURSE TO THE USE FORCE, INCLUDING PREEMPTIVELY. THIS MAJOR CONCESSION TO THE U.S. CASTS A QUESTIONABLE LIGHT ON THE 'MULTILATERAL' NATURE OF THE REFORM." LEACH